

Resume Writing Guide for Design Jobs

When your job target is in a highly visual field, your resume needs to make a strong visual impression. We encourage you to choose a format which showcases your qualifications to their greatest advantage. One caveat here: your presentation must look original as well as professional.

The GSD utilizes eRecruiting (www.harvardgsd.experience.com) to house electronic versions of student resumes. You may upload your resume as a PDF or Word document.

Resume Pointers

A resume is a "living" document that grows and changes with your career. You may even find that you need more than one resume to target different aspects of your career possibilities.

We recommend a one page resume (unless you have several years of work experience). If you choose to create a resume two pages in length, make sure your name is on each page and that the most important information is on the first page. Include a website link which will direct employers to samples of your work. You can also add your website or webpage to your eRecruiting account so that employers viewing your resume can also see your digital images.

Your resume is a marketing tool. Its sole purpose is to persuade employers to interview you. A good resume captures the employer's attention quickly so that he/she will call you for an interview. Use your design skills to create a strong visual impression and direct their eye to your most relevant and impressive information. Develop your own sense of what appeals to you.

Brevity, clarity and focus are the three key elements to an effective resume.

Writing a good resume involves a multi-step process of writing, editing and re-writing. Be sure to visit Career Services to discuss ideas on formats and wording. Career Services staff are available to review and refine your rough drafts. Professors and practitioners can also be of great help to you.

The Resume

Include the following categories of information:

- ✓ **Name, mailing address, e-mail address, and phone number where you can be reached.**
Be sure to include both home and work numbers. Use phone numbers which you are sure will be answered by a reliable message-taker or voicemail. Include your URL if you have one. If you will be available at a given address or number before or after a specific date, say so. Print a new resume whenever this information changes.
- ✓ **Objective.**
Include an objective if there is anything unusual about your interest which you would like to communicate, for example, a strong interest in construction, or a desire to integrate planning and landscape architecture. If the objective is obvious due to your training and experience, feel free to skip it.
- ✓ **Education.**
List your degrees in reverse chronological order, beginning with your current training. Include the name(s) of the degree-granting institutions and dates. You may list coursework highlights, names of your instructors and critics, studio projects, thesis, coursework for which you did not receive a degree, activities, and undergraduate major.

Do not include basic coursework. It's a much better idea to use the space to emphasize upper level coursework. If you are a bit light on relevant work experience, stress your studio projects. You may want to list this experience in a separate section of your resume.

✓ **Awards, honors, prizes.**

Create a separate "Awards" category if you have something fairly substantial to list. International students are encouraged to describe awards that may be unfamiliar to Americans. (For example: "Chosen as one of the top five graduates in Architecture for all Korean universities in 2006.")

✓ **Relevant experience.**

If you have a great deal to list, subdivide it into functional categories ("Design," "Construction," "Preservation"). Within each category, list experience in reverse chronological order. Utilize the majority of space on your resume to emphasize your most relevant experience. This is your place to shine! Briefly summarize less relevant experience.

List organizations you worked for, positions, and dates. Be sure to include internships and/or freelance work. Provide details about the type of work you completed ("presentation drawings") and the types of projects on which you worked ("300,000 sf retail space"). If you managed a project or supervised others, say so. Use verb phrases, not complete sentences.

✓ **Skills.**

A "Skills" section highlights abilities related to the jobs you seek. For example, you may include skills in photography and computer-aided design. You may also want to include language competency and computer skills.

✓ **Additional information.**

Feel free to list any interests which may be a point of contact between you and prospective employers. Many resumes do include information about places to which you have traveled and your willingness to travel and/or relocate (if true).

If anything on your resume indicates that you may not be a U.S. citizen or permanent resident (for example, an undergraduate degree from another country), make the most favorable statement you can about your eligibility for U.S. work permission.

The Curriculum Vitae (C.V.) vs. The Resume

An academic job search requires a different type of document, which is called a c.v. The major difference between a resume and a c.v. is the emphasis on experience versus academic training. The c.v. provides a great deal of academic details. See our separate handout on the academic job search for more information on how to prepare your c.v.

Print Resources

Check the following books in the GSD Career Services Office for more information:

"Resumes That Knock 'em Dead" by Martin Yate, Adams Media, 2004

"Resume Magic: Trade Secrets of a Professional Resume Writer" by Susan Britton Whitcomb, JistWorks, 2006

"Building a Great Resume for Job Hunters, Career Changers, Consultants and Freelancers," by Kate Wendleton, Career Press, 1999